



**CALIFORNIA
HIGH-SPEED RAIL
AUTHORITY**

BRIEFING: December 2011 BOARD MEETING ITEM # 8

TO: Chairman Umberg and Authority Board Members

FROM: Lance Simmens, Deputy Director of Communications

DATE: December 13, 2011

RE: Agenda Item # 8 - Staff Report on the Statewide Media & Communications Contract

Summary

Following discussions with Authority staff, Ogilvy PR Worldwide on 6/30/2011 submitted a letter of resignation to the Authority. The Authority Board approved staff recommendation on July 14, 2011 to rebid for the statewide outreach and communications services. The initial RFP had to unfortunately be withdrawn and a new RFP was released and closed on November 2, 2011. There were eight bidders. In the interim Ogilvy PR Worldwide has continued to provide services for the Authority. This extended contract is due to lapse on December 19th, 2011. This agenda item outlines the status of the bidding process since that time and actions being undertaken to improve the outreach activities.

Background

Outreach & Communications Organization:

The Authority's organizational structure for outreach and communications personnel is as follows:

- Each Regional Consultant (of which there are 10, each responsible for a section of the planned high-speed rail system) conducts or subcontracts for outreach services directly related to the California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] and the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA] processes. These services will end once the environmental clearance for the respective sections are completed, and the Regional Consultant's obligations are fulfilled.
- The Statewide Outreach & Communications contractor overlays those environmental review-related outreach efforts, providing regional representatives to coordinate with the 10 outreach teams, ensuring standardization, etc. as described in the attached draft scope.

- The Authority has a modest state staff of public information officers (currently a Public Information Officer and a newly hired Assistant Public Information Officer, with budget authorization for one more position).
- Efforts are overseen by the Authority's Deputy Director for Communications.

Statewide Communications Contract:

The Statewide Outreach & Communications contractor should be responsible for determining a comprehensive communications and outreach strategy for reaching the broadest possible audience with accurate information about the state's high-speed train project, its benefits and major decision points, and to use traditional and creative means of disseminating that information, while targeting key audiences with greater need for project information. The overall goal is to use communications and outreach to aid in the overall success of the high-speed rail project.

Present Status:

An evaluation committee was formed to evaluate and score seven qualified proposals. Based on oral scores, written scores, and costs the committee reached a consensus on a preferred firm. Over the past several weeks, however, management has undertaken an examination of existing public outreach resources currently under contract within the Authority (own Authority resources as well as Regional Consultant's resources) and are exploring a proposal to consolidate existing reporting relationships and structural arrangements into a more efficient and effective public outreach matrix, augmented by the addition of 6-10 positions either through new hires or personnel from other State agencies.

Staff Recommendation

At this time it is recommended that the Authority not award the Statewide Communications contract pending the examination of restructuring existing personnel structures. When the analysis is completed the Board will be requested to ratify such, including the possible placement of a contract with the external Statewide Media & Communications contractor.